The Scattered Sheep SOUGHT AFTER.

In a Lamentation, over the general loss of the powerful presence of God in his People, since the dayes of the Apostles; with a particular bewailing of the withering and death of those precious buddings forth of life, which appeared in many of the beginning of the late troubles in these Nations, with the proper way of recovery for such.

In some Propositions concerning the only way of Salvation; where is an answer given to that great Objection, that the Light which convinceth of Sin, is the Light of a natural Conscience; and a brief Account rendered of the ground of Mens misunderstanding Scriptures.

In exposing to view the Fundamental Principle of the Gospel, upon which the redeemed spirit is built.

And in some Questions and Answers (by way of Catechisme, for the sake of the simple-hearted) directing to that Principle, and fixing in it.

By *Isaac Penington*, the Younger.

When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died. And now they sin more and more, &c.

Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew, &c. Hos. 13. 1, 2, 3.

Thus his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up, vers. 15.

We have all been as Sheep going astray; but blessed be the everlasting Arm, which hath gathered any of us to the Shepheard and Bishop of our souls.

Beams to the Fould, O scattered Sheep come to the Fould; Wander no longer from mountain to hill, but remember your resting-place, the old resting-place of Israel, even the mountain of the Lords house, where Israel may lie down, and feed in peace, and no ravenous Beast can disturb.

O house of Jacob, let whoredome, wine, and new wine, no longer steal away your hearts, but come ye, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

LONDON, Printed by *G. D.* for *Lodowick Lloyd*, and are to be sold at the Sign of the *Castle* in *Cornhill*, 1659.

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The PREFACE.

MY people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out Cisterns, broken Cisterns that can hold no water. This was ever and anon the complaint of the Lord concerning Israel, from the beginning to the end. The Lord did delight to be nourish, and bring up that people for himself; but they were almost continually revolting from him, and rebelling against him. He did mighty things for them, but they still forgat him. He redeemed them by his outstretched Arme, he fed them, he defended them, but they knew him not (Isa. 1. 3.) but decked themselves with the Ornaments which they had from him, and then lift up the heel against him. Ezek. 16. 9. &c. Deut. 32. 15. In plain terms, they got what knowledge they could from him into their own vessels, and when they could get up for themselves, live of themselves, without fresh bublings up of life from the spring, from whence their knowledge came (the Priests said not, Where is the Lord? but could handle the Law, and teach the knowledge of it without him: and the Prophets could prophesy by another spirit, Jer. 23. 28.) And thus the Lord God of life lived not in them, but they lived upon such things as once came from the life, but (being separated from the spring) were dead, and nourished but the dead part in them, the part estranged from God. And thus though their professions were great, and they multiplied prayers, and sacrifices, and fasts, and drew nigh to God with their lips, yet their hearts were far from him. They had forsaken the Fountain, they drank not of the waters of the spring (of the rock that followed them) but they drank of the waters of their own Cisterns. They set up that knowledge of the Law for their light, which they had hewed out with the tools of their own understanding, without that spirit that wrote it. This was Israels sore of old, they drunk very zealously of the waters of the Law, but they drank it not from the spring, but out of the Cisterns which themselves had hewed.

And so it was then with Israel of old, so it hath been with Israel since. The Christian Israel hath been always back-sliding, always forgetting the Lord; still getting what they could from him to live of themselves, but refusing to live on him: getting what knowledge they could from the Scriptures without him, getting what they could from their exercise and experiences, but neglecting the spring of their life. And so this Israel also dies, this Israel likewise withers, and becomes

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a scorn to the heathen? for though they speak great words of their God, yet they themselves are but as the heathen, uncircumcised like them, unacquainted with the vertue and power of life like them, always striving against sin in that which cannot conquer, and so they also are slaves under their lusts and corruptions, like the heathen, and know not the truth which makes free indeed.

Exceeding great hath been the apostacy of this age. Mighty was the appearance of God inwardly in his peoples Spirits, mighty was the appearance of God outwardly in the Nation, many wayes and great hopes there was of a thorow reformation. But how suddenly was the pure Spirit of the Lord forgotten, and departed from, and his work overturned both within & without; inwardly in his Peoples spirits, and outwardly in the Nation, whose revolting was but a type of the inward. And how hath the Spirit of the Lord mourned after his people, often reproving them for their back-slidings? but they have been (as Israel of old, like the deaf Adder) justifying themselves, and complaining against the witnesses of God (as Israel did against his Prophets) who from the Lord testify against them. And it cannot be otherwise: for the dead waters in Israels hewen Cisterns, will never agree with the waters of the living Fountain, but will withstand their Testimony.

How shall the charmer charm wisely enough, to make apostate Israel hearken to his voyce? I have not back-slidden, saith one in one form, I have not back-slidden, saith another in another form: I am not back-slidden saith one, in one notion; I am not bak-slidden, saith another, in another notion: I am believing, hoping, and waiting in what the Lord hath already revealed, & following on to know him. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my word, but still hast been justifying thy self, as if thou hadst obeyed. And yet your back-slidings are written upon your fore-heads, as with the point of a Diamond, for who among you retains his freshness? an evident demonstration that ye are departed from the spring, and hold your knowledg, experiences, and hopes in the dead part; and your chiefest prop of comfort is the remembrance of what ye once had. Ah poor, barren, dead soul, is this your best support? Return, return, enter into the house of mourning, and let the living lay it to heart.

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A LAMENTATION WITH A CALL TO MOURNING AND LAMENTATION, &c.

O *Israel*, the royal seed, the plant of renown, the living off-spring of eternity; O Daughter of *Sion*, who didst once shine with the beauty and glory of life, what is become of thee! how art thou held captive, and chained up in Babylon! how dost thou lie sullyed among the pots! how are the wings of thy Dove clipped! how art thou covered, and polluted with the filth of the whole earth!

O take up a Lamentation, weep O *Israel*, mourn O Daughter of *Jerusalem*, bewail thy widdow-hood, thy desolation, thy loss of Husband, thy sad captivity, thy banishment out of thine own land, and thy thraldome in the land of thine enemy.

What is become of thy God, the mighty God of *Jacob*, whose out-stretched arme hath been able to save and redeem his seed out of bondage? What enemy hath been able to stand before him? What wild Boar out of the Wood, or wild Beast out of the Forrest, was able to break into his Vineyard, while he kept the fence? Where is that arme that smote *Rahab*, and slew the *Dragon*? Where is that hook that he was wont to put into the nostrils of the *Leviathan*? *Pharoah* is alive, the wise *Egyptians* have power, *Egypt* holds the seed in bondage, *Gebal*, *Ammon*, and *Amalelek*, the Philistins with the inhabitants of *Tire*, are all able to smite *Israel*, and to stop up the well-springs of life. Awake O arme of the Lord, and awaken *Israel*, that thou again maist become his Saviour in the sight of all the Nations; and let all the

house of *Israel*, being awakened, mourn in the Spirit of the Lord after the Lord.

What is become of thy *Messiah*, the Lords anointed, the Captain of the Lords hoasts, the Angel of the Covenant of life, who was wont to go in and out before thee in fighting of the Lords battels, who was thy Prince and Saviour in the Land of peace and rest, who walked in the midst of the candlesticks, who was thy King, thy shepheard, thy temple wherein thou worshippedst, and the eternal Light of thy life in the Land of the living?

What is become of that holy Spirit which quickened thee to God, and which lived in thee being quickened? which hept thee alive in him that liveth, and made thee taste the sweetness of life continually? Where is the anoynting, which suppled thee all over with the oyl of gladness and Salvation? Where is the comforter, that refreshed thy Spirit continually, and led thee into all truth, teaching thee all the things of God, according to thy measure of growth in the life? Where is the Spirit of thy Father, which Spirited thee with thy Fathers nature, which begot and brought forth the life, power, glory, majesty, eternity of thy Father in thee?

What is become of Sion, the holy Mount, whereon thou wast built? Sion, the fortress of holiness, where is it? What is become of *Jerusalem* the holy City, thy Mother whereof thou wast born? What is become of that Covenant of Life, in whose womb thou wast begotten and brought forth, and by whose Milk, and breath thou wast afterward nourished and brought up?

Where are all the fruits of the holy Land? the pleasant Grapes, the sweet Figs, the precious Olives that yeilded Wine and Oyl to make the heart glad, and to refresh the countenance of the Lord of life? Where's the joy in the Lord, the obedience to the Lord, the praying, the praising, the living, the walking in his Spirit, the entering into and bringing forth fruit in his pure understanding, and in his holy unspotted will and movings in the purified heart?

Alas, alas, *Babylon* hath prevailed, her King hath reigned, *Sion* hath been held in bonds, and that which hath sprung up under her name, hath been the filthy off-spring of *Babylon*, the seed of the Mother of Harlots: and these have brought forth sower fruit, loathsome fruit, finely painted to the view of that eye which can-

not search into it, but loathsome in its nature. This hath been the State of the apostacy since the dayes of the Apostles, wherein that which hath not been of God hath reigned, and that which hath been of God hath suffered, and been reproached as if it had not been of God, and hath panted and mourned after the springing up of the spring of its life, and its gathering into it.

The deep sence of this hath afflicted my Soul from my tender years, the eternal witness awakening in me, and the eternal light manifesting the darkness all along unto me, though I knew not that it was the light, but went about to measure its appearances in me, by words which it self had formerly spoken to others, and so set up my own understanding and comprehension as the measurer, although I did not then perceive or think that I did so. Thus continually (through ignorance) I slew the life, and sold my self for a thing of nothing, even for such an appearance of life, as my understanding part could judge most agreeable to Scriptures. This the Lord blew upon, though its comliness was unutterable (the life still feeding my Spirit underneath, from whence sprang an inward beauty and freshness:) then such a day (or rather night) of darkness and distress overtook me, as would make the hardest heart melt to hear the relation of, yet the Lord was in that darkness, and he preserved me, and was forming of me to himself, and the taste I had then of him, was far beyond what ever I had known in the purest strains of my Religion formerly. And the Lord powerfully shut up my understanding, and preserved my life from the betrayer. But yet that was not perfectly destroyed in me, upon which the Tempter might work: and the Lord suffered him to lay a snare, and my feet were intangled unawares, in so much as the simplicity was betrayed, and the fleshly part grew wise by those exercises wherewith the Lord had tried me. This poisoned me, this hurt me, this struck at the root of my life, and death insensibly grew upon me. The Devil (the envious seedsman) conferred me with the Image of that, which before I had had in the truth, opening my understanding part (by the subtilty of temptation and deceit) which the Lord had been destroying, and letting that in, which the Lord had shut out: and then the Lord took away, and shut up from that part, that which before he had opened to the seed, whereby the way of life became stopped, and the way of death opened in a Mistery. And then I could talk of

universall love, of Spirituall liberty &c, and wait for the glorious appearance of life, having lost that which formerly gave me the sence of its nature: yea, at length I could seek to the creatures for what they could yeild, and strive to rub out the time of my misery without the immediate presence of the life of the creatour. And as for this despicable people (whom I now own in the Lord) I could measure them, I could fathome them: I could own their standing and yet see there shortness, and could (with satisfaction to my spirit) write death upon them, as the end of that dispensation of life, into which I saw them entering, and in part entred. Here was my standing, when the Lord drew his sword upon me, and smote me in the very inmost of my Soul: by which stroke (lying still a while under it) my eyes came to be opened, and then I saw the blindness of that eye, which was able to see so far, & the narrowness of that heart and spirit, which was so large and vaill in comprehending: and my Soul bowed down to the Lord to slay this, to starve this, to make a fool of this; yea my desire was (to present sence) as great after the death of this, as after the enjoyment of life in the Lord.

And now this hath opened a fresh spring of sorrow in me, a mourning over the just one, which hath been slain by me. O how cruelly, how often have I murthered that, which came to give me life! how often have I sought to have my own understanding, my own comprehension, my own will and affections in Religion live, and the righteous pure immortal principle dye! though I did not then call it my own (as other men do not now) but took it to be of God, and to be the thing that was to live: for I also was deceived, and thought the Bastard (which was a false conception) was to inherit, not knowing him to be the Bastard, but taking him for the right heir. And my Soul is exceedingly enlarged in me towards those, who at this day lye under the power of the same deceit, who have slain the Lord of life as well as I, and in whom the contrary nature lives under a covering, who cannot possibly see that this (which now lives in them) is not the heir, untill the same eye be opened in them.

The life that was stirring, at the beginning of the trouble of these Nations, was very precious: it did unite to God, it did unite to one another: it kindled an universall sence of the Captivity, of the bondage, of the great oppression of *Israel*, and a joynt cry went

arose up to God for deliverance. And God heard the cry, and arose to deliver, and did begin to break the yoke both outwardly in the Nation, and inwardly in peoples spirits.

But then the tempter did also set himself on work, again to entangle *Israel*. For this end he brings forth likenesses of that which *Israel* desired, and was seeking after. He brings forth several forms of worship to allure some with, several sorts of notions to allure others with, several fresh appearances of life, of love, of liberty, to tempt the people of God aside from following that Spirit which rose up to deliver. Thus comes he forth, and prevails: he divides in *Jacob*, and scatters in *Israel*; drawing one part to this form, another part towards that form, one to this Notion, another to that Notion; one to this inward Image, another to that spiritual Idol; and all from the life, all from the Power, all from the Saviour, all from the deliverer: and so the work stops. It stops in the Nation, and it stops in peoples spirits, and men generally wheel about, and enter again, and apply themselves to make Images like the Images they had destroyed: and so the Captivity returns, *Israel* is turned back into his bonds, and the Spirit which oppressed him before, again crusheth him, and rules over him. And so great hath the breach been upon *Israel*, that the Spirit of the world is become hardened, and thinks there's an end of this work of God; and now they may venture again to settle both Church and State, upon the old Principles of that wisdom which the Lord was shaking.

And now, where is the people whom the Lord was redeeming; where is the praying People, the panting People, the mourning People, the people that could have travailed from sea to sea to have had the will of God revealed? Are they not run into the earth? is not the spirit of the earth come over them? are they not dividing the spoils? The inward Jew, the renewed nature is sunck, lost, made a prey of; the Gentile, the Heathenish Spirit hath risen up, and seated it self in a form of worship, or in some high Notions of knowledge, on which that Spirit (which knows not the Tree of life) loves to feed. Some are stark dead, no sence at all in them, but life quite swallowed up of death: Others perhaps are still pressing towards the Kingdom, but in the wrong nature, in that which shall never obtain: and they may there meet with some enjoyments, but not enjoyments from or of the true thing;

thing, but of the likeneſs which the enemy hath painted to deceive them with: and they may alſo wait and hope that the Kingdom will come, and yet be out of that which knows its coming, and can alone prepare the heart for its appearance. Yea ſome are got ſo high, that they are even in the Throne: they have the love, the life, the liberty, the joy, the peace of the Kingdom (as they imagine.) They can reign as Kings without us, without that nature and principle wherein our life lies. But theſe mighty ones, theſe Princes the Lord will pull from their Seat, and raiſe up the humble, the meek, the low in heart, the beggar from the dunghil, and give to him the Throne of his glory.

Now this, my life in love ſaith to you all, as the proper and only way of your recovery and redemption, come to that which can judge you. *Sion is to be redeemed with judgement, and her converts with righteouſneſs.* If *Sion* be redeemed, if the ſeed be again raiſed, that Spirit which hath got up above it (and keepeth it down) muſt be judged, and brought under by judgment. How was *Iſrael* of old to be recovered from her idolatries and whoredoms, but by owning and coming to that light in the Prophets which manifeſted and judged it? Ye alſo have worſhipped idols, ye alſo have run a whoring from the Lord, and have been inflamed with Idols under every green Tree. Every new Idol, every freſh appearance, every lively likeneſs hath tempted you aſide from the living God. When one way of worſhip hath been dry and barren, ye have left that; when ſome notions of things have appeared empty and ſhallow, ye have been weary of them: but the next new Idol, under the next green Tree, hath drawn you aſide into the bed of whoredom, where ye have loſt true fellowſhip with the true God of life, and have been betrayed of the ſeed of life, which he began to quicken and raiſe from the dead. Now come to that which judgeth the Idol, the Idol-maker, the whoriſh Spirit which tempteth aſide from the true husband, and that Spirit which is liable to be Tempted, and let theſe be cut down by the judgment, and then the true ſeed of life will ſpring and flouriſh again. There is no other way, be not deceived. That muſt be awakened in you which can judge you, and muſt bring forth its judgment in you unto Victory, if life in you ever riſe and get the dominion over death. And that Spirit which now rules in you (and keeps the life down) knows this very well, and therefore

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endeavours all it can, to keep you from owning judgement. He would faine keep the light in others from judging you. *Do not judge*, saith he, *All judgement is committed to the Son.* True, but shall not the light of the Son judge? shall not the light of that candle, which the Lord hath lighted in one heart, discover & judg the darkness in another heart? Light doth make manifest, & its manifestation is its judgement, the uttering of the words are but the declaration of what the light in the heart hath done before, and cannot but do: for as long as it is light, where ever it comes, it will and cannot but discover and judge the darkness it meets with, though the darkness cannot own either its discovery or its judgement, but must needs except against it. Now if he cannot do this (which is utterly impossible for the dark spirit to do) then, in the next place, he fortifies and hardens the heart, as much as he can, from receiving the judgement, by perswading him to look upon it as the judgement of another spirit like his own, and not as the judgment of the light. And so what *Paul* said concerning mans judgement (that it was a small matter to him to be judged by mans judgement) the same will he say concerning this judgement. And yet, as the greatest judgement of man, in the highest strain of the comprehending part, shall fall: so the lowest judgement of the light in the weakest child, shall stand; and all the exalted ones of the earth shall in due time fall before it, though now (in the present elevation of their minds) they may rise high above it, and trample it down. Therefore be not afraid to judge deceit, O ye weak ones, but be sure that the light alone in you judge; and lie very low in the light, that that part, which the light in you judgeth in others, get not up in you, while the light is making use of you to judge it in others.

And now ye poor lost souls (who find the need of judgement, and any willingness within you to embrace it) wait first, for the rising of the Judge of Israel in your hearts, and in the next place wait for the joyning of your hearts to him; both which are to be done by his eternal light, which manifests and gives his life. In the lowest shining of this light there is the judgement, and there is the King himself (who is not severed from the least degree or measure of his own light) bow down to him, kiss his feet; know the nature of the thing, and sub-

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631 ject to it: worship him here in his humiliation, receive him in his strokes, in his smitings (and observe, and turn from that in yourselves which smites him) and ye shall one day see him in his majesty, in the power of his love, in his everlasting healings and embraces. And know assuredly, that that which will not worship him here, will not be fit to worship him there, nor shall not; but shall only tremble at the dread of his majesty, and be confounded at the sweetness of his love, but not be able to bow down to it in the true life. For that spirit which is out of the life, is shut out in its highest desires, hopes, attainments, enjoyments, seemingly-spiritual rest, universal love, liberty and peace, as well as in its darkest and grossest paths of pollution. Therefore wait to know the nature of things, that ye may not be deceived with the highest, choicest, and most powerful appearances of death in the exactest image of life, nor stumble at true life in its lowest and weakest appearance. And this ye can only attain to by a birth of, and growth up in the true wisdome, which slaies that spirit which lives on the same things in the comprehension, and gathers a stock of knowledge and experiences in its own understanding part. These are words of tender love, and they will also be words of true life, where the Fathers earth opens to drink them in, to whose good pleasure and blessing my soul commends them.

Some Propositions concerning the only Way of SALVATION.

1. *That there is no way of being saved from sin and wrath eternal, but by that Christ alone which died at Jerusalem.* There is no name, vertue, life or power under heaven given, by which lost man may be saved, but his alone.

2. *That there is no way of being saved by him, but through receiving him into the heart by a living faith, and having him formed in the heart.* Christ saves not as he stands without at the doore knocking, but as he is let in: and being let in, he brings in with him that life, power, and mercy, which breaks down the wall of partition, unites to God, and saves.

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The Jews could not be saved formerly by belief of a Messiah to come (with the observation of all the Laws and Ordinances of *Moses*) nor can any now be saved by beleif of a Christ already come (with observation of all that the Apostles commanded or practised) but alone by the receiving of him into the heart, who there works out the salvation.

3. *That there is no way, of receiving Christ into the heart, and of having him formed there, but by receiving the light of his spirit, in which light he is, and dwels.* Keep out the light of the spirit, keep out Christ; let in the light of the spirit, let in Christ: for the father and the Son are light, and are alone known, and received in the light but never out of it.

4. *That the way of receiving the light of the spirit into the heart* (and thereby uniting with the Father and the Son) *is by hearkning to,* and *receiving its convictions of sin there.* The first operation of the spirit towards man lying in the sin, is to convince him of the sin: and he that receives not the convincing light of the Spirit, the work is stopped in him at the very first; and Christ can never come to be formed in him, because that light, whereby he should be formed, is kept out. And then he may talk of Christ, and practise duties, (pray, read, and meditate much) and gather comforts from promises, and run into ordinances, and be exceeding zealous and affectionate in all these, and yet perish in the end. Yea the Devil will let him alone (if not help him) in all this, knowing that he hath him the surer thereby, he being (by the strict observation of these) kept out of the fear of the danger of his condition, which otherwise perhaps he might be made sensible of.

Object. *But I may be deceived in hearkning to a light within, for while I think that I therein hearken to the light of the Spirit, it may prove but the light of a natural conscience.*

Answ. 1. If it should be but the light of a natural conscience, and it draw thee from sin (which separates from God) and so prepare the for the understanding, believing, and receiving what the Scripture saith of Christ, this is no very bad deceit: but if in the result it should prove to have been the light of the Spirit, and thou all thy life time hast took it for the light of a natural conscience, (& so hast despised, or or at least neglected, if not reproached it) thou will then find that this was a very bad deceit.

2. I can shew thee by expresse Scripture, that it is the work of the Spirit to convince of sin, *John* 16. 8. and again that the law (which is spiritual) manifesteth that which is corrupt and carnal, *Rom.* 7. 14. But where canst thou shew me from Scripture, that a natural conscience can convince of sin?

3. Let any man give heed to the light in his heart, he shall find it to discover his most inward, his most secret, his most spiritual evils, which a natural light cannot do: for that which is natural, cannot discover that wich is spiritual.

4. The Apostle saith, that it is the grace, which hath appeared to all men, which teacheth not only godlinesse, but also sobriety and righteousnesse, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. The light of the fallen nature is darknesse, can teach nothing of God; what any man learns now of the true knowledge of God, he learns by grace, which shines in the darknesse of mans nature, to leaven it with the true knowledge, though man (being darknesse) can by no means comprehend it, and so cannot give it its true name.

Therefore take heed lest (through ignorance) ye blaspheme the holy light of the pure Spirit, calling that natural (looking on it with the carnal eye) which with the spiritual eye is seen to be spiritual. For thou that dost this, wilt be also erring on the other hand, calling thy carnal meanings and conceivings (about the mind of the Spirit of God in Scripture) spiritual. And he that thus puts darknesse for light, must needs put light for darknesse; and then call evil good, and good evil: and so erre from the Spirit of God in the whole course of his religion, even in the most inward exercises of it.

Man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins, quite dead, and his conscience wholly dark. That which giveth him the sense of his death, and of his darknesse, must be another thing then his nature, even the light of the Spirit of Christ, shining in his dark heart and conscience. It is the seed of the woman which not only destroyes, but also discovers all the deeds of the Serpent. Now this seed, this light is one in all, though there have been several dispensations of it. One to the heathen, in whom it springs up after an hidden manner, even as it were naturally, from whence it had the name of *the light of nature* (though it be the mystery of life and Salvation hid in them, *Col.* 1. 27. *this mystery in the Gentiles*, it is ill translated *among*:) another to the Jews, in whom it was more rigorously

stirred up by a Law given, who by types and shadows, and righteous exercises according to the Law, were to be awakned to the living principle, *Micah.* 6. 8. Another to the Christians, in whom it was livelily brought forth to light and life, by an especial dispensation of grace: in so much as that which was the *mystery in the Gentiles*, and Vailed from the Jews, being opened in them, was found to be *Christ the hope*, *Col.* 1. 27. But under all these dispensations, the generality of men have fallen short of the glory of God, and missed of the substance. Therefore the Lord God is now bringing forth the substance it self, but under such a vaile, as hides it from the eye of mans wisdome, under what dispensation soever he be, and how high soever in that dispensation. To some it seems natural, to others legal; to some it seems from the power of Satan (or at least they pretend so) to others it seems the ministry of *John Baptist*. Thus men gueſs at it in the wisdome of their comprehensions, wanting the true line and plummet to measure it by.

Now to you who have not waited to learn in the wisdome of God the names of things (which there are given according to their nature) but in the forwardnes of your Spirits, from your gathered knowledge, without the living power, have ventured to call that natural, which in the eternal wisdome is seen to be spiritual (and which hath been able to effect that, which all that knowledge which ye call spiritual, could never do) let me propose the consideration of one Scripture to your consciences in the sight of God.

The Scripture is that in *Job* 28. 12. to the end.

Where shall wisdome be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, it is not in me, and the Sea saith, not with me. It cannot be gotten for Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed for the price thereof, &c. Whence then cometh wisdome, and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowles of Heaven. Destruction and Death say, we have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof, &c. And said unto man, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdome, and to depart from evil is understanding. Now consider

First, Is this natural wisdom, or spiritual wisdom that is thus precious? What is this that destruction & death have heard the fame of? Is it the wisdom of nature? or is it Christ the wisdom of God?

Secondly, Where is the place of this? Where doth God point man to find this wisdom? He points him to the fear, *Unto man he said* (he hath shewed thee, O man, what is good) *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* Go to the fear, there it is taught, that is the wisdom: learn by the fear to depart from evil, that's the understanding. This is it which is so precious, which nothing can equalize or value, here is the place of it, thus it is to be learned. Sin overspreads all the land of darkness, there is no fear of God before mens eyes there, there is no learning of the fear there, all the wisdome that man can come by, cannot teach it: he that learneth to fear God, to depart from evil, must learn of Christ the wisdom of God, and must deny all the varieties of the wisdom of man, which undertakes it to teach it, but cannot.

Thirdly, What is that in every man, which teacheth the fear? which teacheth to depart from evil? Every man hath in him an eye that sees the evil, what is that eye, which the God of this world doth so strive to blind, and doth so generally blind? Every man hath in him an enemy to evil, one that never consented to it, but still reproves it, and fights against it, even in secret: what is this? This is no less then a ray from Christ the wisdome of God, out of the seat of the fear in every heart, to lead into the fear, where the Law of departing from iniquity is learned: and so this ray, being hearkned unto, and followed in the fear, brings up into the love, into the life, into the light, into the wisdome, into the power. Do not shut your eyes now, O ye wise ones, but open your hearts, and let in that which knocks there, which can, and will save you, being let in, and which alone can save you. For it is not a notion of a Christ without (with multitudes of practises of self-denyal and mortification thereupon) which can save, but Christ heard knocking, and let into the heart. This will open the Scriptures aright; yea this is the true key, which will truly open words, things, and Spirits: but he that opens without this key, is a Thief and a Robber, and shall restore (in the day of Gods Judgment) all that he hath stollen: & woe to him, who when he was stripped of what he hath stollen, is found naked.

The

The Scriptures were generally given forth to the people of God, part to the Jews, part to the Christians. He that is born of the life, hath right unto them, and can read and understand them in the Spirit, which dwels in the life. But he that is not born of the Spirit, but an intruder, and doth but steal other mens light, and other mens conditions and experiences into his carnal understanding, for which they were never intended, but only to be read and seen in that light which wrote them. And all these carnal apprehensions of his (with all the faith, hope, love, knowledge, exercises, &c. which he hath gained into his Spirit hereby, with all his prayers, tears, and fasts, and other imitations) will become loss to him, (for he must be stripped of them all, and become so much the more naked) when God recovers his Scriptures from mans dark Spirit (which hath torn them, and exceedingly prophaned them with his conceivings, guessings, and imaginings) and restores them again to his people. The Prophets, and Apostles who wrote Scripture, first had the life in them: and he who understands their words, must first have the life in him. He that understands words of life, must first have life in himself. And the life (from which the words came) is the measurer of the words, and not the words of the life. And when the Scripture is interpreted by the life and Spirit which penned it, there is then no more jangling and contending about it: for all this is out of the life, from and in that Spirit, nature, and mind where the lust, the enmity, the contention is, and not the unity, the love, the peace. But this is it which undoeth all, the dead Spirit of man reads Scripture, and from that wisdome which is in the death (not knowing the mind of the Spirit) gives meanings: and from believing and practising the things there spoken of (which death may do, as well as speak of the same) gathers an hope that all shall be well at last for Christs sake, though it feel not the purification, the cleansing, the circumcision which cuts of the body of sin and death here, (for it is not to be cut off hereafter) and so gives an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom, where the King of righteousness is seen, known, and worshipped in Spirit.

The Fundamental Principle of the Gospel.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, 1 John 1.5.

This

This was the message which Christ gave his Apostles, to make way into mens hearts by. This is the first thing that is proper for the mind to receive, which lies in the darkness, Namely, that there is no darkness in God, nothing but light. Darkness is excluded from him, and the mind that lies in darkness cannot have union or fellowship with him. Therefore he that will be one with God, and partake of his life, must come out of the darkness, which hath no place with God, into the light where God is, and in which he dwels.

The work of the Son is to reveal the Father, and to draw to the Father. He reveals him as light (as the spring of light, as the fountain of light) and he draws to him as light. When he gives to his Apostles the standing message whereby they were to make him known to the world, and whereby men were to come into fellowship and acquaintance with him, this is it, *that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

Christ Jesus, the Son of God, he is the Image of his substance, the exact Image of this light, the light of the world, who is to light the world unto this substance. So that as God the Father is to be known as light, so Christ the Son also is to be known as light. He is the onely begotten of the Father of lights, the alone Image wherein the eternal substance is revealed and made known. And he that receives this Image, receives the substance; and he that receives not this Image, receives not the substance.

Now there is a breath or Spirit from this substance in this Image, which draws to the Image, (thus the Father draws to the Son:) and the Image again draws to the substance, (thus the Son draws to the Father.) And so hearkening to this breath, the mind and soul is led out of the darkness, into the Image of light (which is the Son) and by the Image into the substance: and here's the fellowship which the Gospel invites to. Joyning to this breath, being transformed by this breath, living in this breath, walking in this holy inspiration, there's an unity with the Father and the Son, who themselves dwell in this breath, from whom this breath comes, in whom this breath is, and in whom all are who are one with this breath.

This breath purgeth out the dark breath, the dark aire, the dark powers, the mistery of death and darkness, and fils with the breath of light, with the breath of life, with the living power, with the holy pure mistery.

Now

Now as the Father is light, and the Son light, ſo this breath, this Spirit which proceeds from them both, is light alſo. And as the Father who is light, can alone be revealed by the Son who is light: ſo the Son who is light, can alone be revealed by the Spirit who is light.

He then who hears this meſſage, that God is light, and feeleth himſelf darkneſs and in darkneſs, and is willing to be drawn out of the darkneſs, into fellowſhip with God who is light: This is requiſite for him to know, Namely, how he may be drawn out, who it is that draws, and which are the drawings, that he may not reſiſt or neglect them (waiting for another thing) and ſo miſs of the true & only paſſage unto life. Wherefore obſerve this heedfully.

None can draw to the Father, but the Son; none can draw to the Son, but the Father: and both theſe alone draw by the Spirit. The Father by his Spirit draws to the Son, and the Son by the ſame Spirit draws to the Father: and they both draw by the Spirit as he is light, as he is their light lighted to that end. For as the Father is light, and the Son light; ſo that Spirit which draws to them, muſt be light alſo. He is indeed the breath of light, eternally lighted, to draw to the eternal Image of light, & then to the eternal ſubſtance, which eternally dwels in that eternal Image.

Queſt. *But how may I know the Spirit and its operations, that I may follow him, and be led by them, both to the Son and to the Father, and ſo come into the everlaſting fellowſhip?*

Anſw. The Spirit is to be known, by thoſe motions and operations which are proper to him, which flow alone from him, and from nothing elſe.

Queſt. *What are they?*

Anſw. Convincing of ſin, and reproving for ſin, which nothing can truly diſcover and reprove but the light of the Spirit. Darkneſs cannot make manifeſt darkneſs, but whatſoever maketh manifeſt is light. All the diſcoveries of darkneſs, in the hidden world of the heart, are from Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs, by his Spirit, what name ſoever men may give it, who know not this Sun, nor its light, nor the true names of things in the light, but have named, even the things of God in the dark, and according to the dark apprehenſions and conceptions of their own imaginary mind. But this I ſay to ſuch, who are ſo ready to beat their brains and diſpute, leave contending about names, come to the thing, come to that which reproves thee in ſecret, follow the light that

thus

thus checks and draws; be diligent, be faithful, be obedient; thou shalt find this lead thee to that, which all thy knowledge out of this (even all that which thou calleſt Spiritual light) will never be able to lead thee.

And when thou art joyned to this light, it will ſhew thee him whom thou haſt pierced (even ſo as never yet thou ſaweſt him) and open a freſh vain of blood and grief in thee, to bleed and mourn over him; and work that repentance in thee, which thou never waſt acquainted with before; and teach thee that faith, to which yet thou art a ſtranger; and teach thee that ſelf-denial, which will reach to the very root of that nature which yet lives, even under that, and by means of that which thou calleſt ſpiritual light; and will lay ſuch an yoke on thy neck, as the unrighteous one is not able to beare, yea ſuch an one as the hypocrite (which is able to hide it ſelf under confeſſions of ſin, and forms of zeal, knowledge, devotion nd worſhip) ſhall be daily tormented and waſted with. And then thou ſhalt know what it is to wait upon God in the way of his judgements, and find the powers of life and death ſtriving for thy ſoul, and daily flouds and ſtorms encompaſſing and attending thee, under which thou wilt aſſuredly fall and periſh, unleſs the everlaſting arme of Gods power be ſtretched out for thee, and be continually redeeming thee. And then thou wilt feel and ſee how ſin is pardoned, and how it is bound; how death brake in upon *Adam*, and how it daily breaks in upon mankind; and what that ſtandard is, which the ſpirit of the Lord lifteth up againſt the powers of darkneſs. And then thou wilt come cleerly to perceive, how that wch thou haſt called religion formerly (which flowed not from this principle) hath been but the invention of thine own imaginary mind (though thou fatheredſt it upon the Scriptures, as moſt men do moſt of their inventions about Doctrine and worſhip) wherein thou haſt been in a dream of being changed, and yet remaineſt ſtill the ſame in nature, & haſt had a name that thou haſt lived, but art ſtill dead; a name of being ſanctified, but ſtill unclean; a name of being juſtified, but ſtill condemned by the light in thine own conſcience, which is one with him who is thy judge, & who will judge according to it. And ſo, as that which is real taketh place in thee; ſo that which hath been but imaginary, will paſs away.

The End